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ABSTRACT

This guide is published by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry Responsible for Multiculturalism and Human Rights in British Columbia for use in the schools. It is divided into three main sections: Part I--selection of learning resources on both the provincial and local levels; Part II--challenges to and complaints about recommended resources; Part III--appendices, which include an educational resource materials order schedule, evaluation forms used at the provincial level, a samples annotation, a sample local resource selection policy, Educational Resources Advisory Committee terms of reference, a complaint form for provincially authorized or recommended resources, and copyright information. An extensive learning resources evaluation guide is also appended. It contains in-depth evaluation forms; checklists; and evaluation criteria that take into account instructional and technical design, multicultural representation, and special needs of handicapped learners in learning resources. (ALF)

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Selection and Challenge of Learning Resources

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Learning Resources Branch

Re-printed 1992

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Province of
British Columbia

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Table of Contents

Part I: Selection of Learning Resources 5

A. Provincial Selection of Resources 5

1. Definition of Learning Resources
2. Status of Learning Resources
3. Rationale for Resources Selection
4. Special Needs Audience Resources
5. The Provincial Process for Resource Selection; Learning Resources Branch Mandate
6. Criteria for the Evaluation of Resources
7. Annotations
8. Catalogue of Learning Resources

B. Local Selection of Resources 8

1. District Policies
2. Roles and Responsibilities
3. Library Materials

Part II: Challenges and Complaints 8

1. Complaints Concerning Provincially Authorized or Recommended Resources
   a) Process
   b) Complaint Forms
2. Complaints Concerning Locally Selected Resources

Part III: Appendices 11

1. Educational Resource Materials Order #143 13
2. Evaluation Forms Used At The Provincial Level 14
3. Sample Annotation 19
4. Sample Local Resource Selection Policy 20
5. Terms of Reference, Educational Resources Advisory Committee 28
6. Complaint Form For Provincially Authorized or Recommended Resources 29
7. Copyright Information 32
8. Learning Resources Evaluation Guide

NOTES

Part I:
Selection of Learning Resources

A. Provincial Selection of Resources

1. Definition of Learning Resources

Learning resources include but are not limited to materials in print, video and software formats as well as combinations of these formats intended for use by teachers and students.

2. Status of Learning Resources

Learning resources fall into one of three categories:

Authorized

- This is a legal status granted to materials which have been given Minister's Order Approval as appropriate for school use. These materials are warehoused and distributed by Learning Resources Branch and may include all formats (print, software, multimedia); they are available for purchase through Credit Allocation Plan funding and are listed in the *Catalogue of Learning Resources*.

Recommended

- This is a legal status granted to materials which have been given Minister's Order Approval as appropriate for school use. These materials are purchased directly from suppliers by the users and may include all formats (print, software, multimedia). Video duplication rights are purchased provincially for recommended video titles. Titles are then made available through Image Media Services. They are listed in the *Catalogue of Learning Resources* and in annotations documents.

Supplementary

- These are resources used at the discretion of districts and subject to district selection policies and procedures; supplementary resources are not evaluated by the Ministry. This category includes all formats (print, software, and multimedia packages). All materials used which are not listed as authorized or recommended by the Ministry of Education are considered to be supplementary.

3. Rationale for Learning Resource Selection

- In selecting provincially authorized or recommended learning resources, the Ministry is concerned to identify and annotate a wide variety of educationally appropriate materials which will provide for a range of teaching and learning styles.
- While resources are selected to support provincial programs and curricula, it is not intended that specific resources be referenced to specific learning outcomes. Rather, it is expected that users will select resources to suit their particular educational needs and audiences.
- All usages of materials will involve the teacher as mediator and facilitator of learning as necessary; students may be expected to have some choice in materials selection for specific purposes such as independent reading or research.
- It is not expected that any single resource will be sufficient to teach a course. Rather, a multimedia approach is encouraged which integrates materials from different packages and media.
- A number of selected resources fall into the "cross-strand" category and are suitable for use across disciplines or strands in that they allow for a variety of approaches to content, or include a variety of different types of content.
- Materials recommended for school use will include reference materials for teacher background as well as resources for day to day applications.
- Materials selected will be consistent with the goals of the Year 2000 initiatives and will be considerate of the multicultural audience of British Columbia.
- Criteria in the areas of content, instructional design, and social considerations will be consistently applied in the selection process.
- Special audience needs will be recognized and reflected in annotation of the resources.

- Opportunities for integration across strands and disciplines will be promoted through resource selection and identified in annotations for selected resources.

- The selection process will also include the review of currently listed resources which may continue to be listed, be delisted, or updated as appropriate.

- Resources are evaluated for English and French audience needs. They include materials for Programme Cadre, French Immersion and French as a Second Language.

4. **Special Needs Audience Resources**

   The Ministry includes special needs audiences in evaluation and annotation of learning resources. As well, special format versions of some selected resources (braille and taped book formats) are available. A catalogue of available titles has been sent to districts. Further copies are available from the Provincial Resource Centre for the Visually Impaired.

5. **The Provincial Process for Resource Selection; Learning Resources Branch Mandate**

   The selection of provincially authorized or recommended learning resources is carried out by the Learning Resources Branch of the Ministry in accordance with section 182 (2) (e) of the School Act. The process is based on teacher evaluation using established criteria in areas of content and instructional design and on user factors such as social considerations for the intended audience and context of usage. Other Ministry Branches assist in this process as specific expertise is required. Evaluators are trained in application of Ministry criteria prior to evaluation of materials.

   At the provincial level, the selection of resources involves the following steps:

- Approval is sought for resource selection in a particular area or level (based on established priorities determined in conjunction with Curriculum Development Branch and other branches as appropriate). A five year curriculum cycle is the planning framework.

- A "Call" letter is sent to suppliers requesting submission of appropriate learning materials for the curricula and program level as outlined in the letter and appendices.

- Evaluation of submissions takes place. Print, video and software formats are evaluated using teacher evaluators selected from around the province (opportunities to evaluate resources are publicized to schools): these evaluators include representation from special audiences such as teachers of students with special needs. Teacher librarians are also included in the process as appropriate. All evaluators are trained to apply Ministry criteria consistently using standard evaluation formats.

- Short-listed materials are identified and annotated; negotiation for video rights acquisition and provincial prices for software options packaging are identified at this stage. When negotiating for the software titles included as 'recommended' resources, the Learning Resources Branch endeavours to come to an agreement with the publisher or distributor of each package. The prices listed in the annotations and *Catalogue of Learning Resources* are from the publishers or producers listed in the appendix. For United States based companies, the price is quoted in U.S. dollars. In many cases, site licences or bulk purchases require dealing directly with the publisher or distributor. However, for single copies or lab packs, better pricing, support, or service may be available from a local British Columbia dealer or from a catalogue sales organization.

- Short-listed materials are reviewed and confirmed by the Ministry; issues which have arisen around potential recommendations are discussed and resolved at this stage of the process. Issues might involve accessibility, choice, etc.

- Minister's Order approval is obtained.

- Annotations are distributed to schools.

- The *Catalogue of Learning Resources* is updated, published, and distributed to schools on an annual basis.

6. Criteria for the Evaluation of Resources:

In general the following criteria are used at the provincial level to evaluate resources. These criteria are further developed in the provincial *Learning Resources Evaluation Guide*: A copy of the guide and the evaluation forms used at the provincial level are appended to this package.

- The resources are current, accurate and relevant to provincial curricula and program design.
- The resources are appropriate in terms of content, form, methodology and context of usage.
- The resources are as fair, objective, free from bias, propaganda, discrimination and stereotyping as is reasonable and possible, and promote, as far as possible, a recognition of the multicultural context of British Columbia.
- All learning resources shape and define attitudes about and towards women and men. They contribute to the construction of gender role/identity/relations by the ways they represent women and men. All classroom use of learning resources should, therefore, involve students in explicit attention to literal and implicit assumptions with respect to gender.
- The resources are interesting, well organized, of good quality and easily used in the intended setting and with the intended audience.
- Resources are S.I. metric as appropriate.
- Items authorized or recommended for use in the British Columbia schools should be, as fully as possible, of Canadian authorship and publication. All other factors being equal, preference will be given to materials developed and/or produced in British Columbia.
- Resources and/or services are appropriate to support the development of problem-solving and decision-making skills, foster the development of critical thinking and focus on learning.
- Resources for specific audiences and context of usage may necessitate consideration of factors specific to the situational need.

7. Annotations:

Annotations are descriptions of teaching and learning resources. They include a list of components and ordering information. An annotation is written for each resource. Annotations include prices provided by suppliers at the time when the materials were short-listed; these will date over time.

Materials for teachers are designated either Professional References or Teacher Resources. Professional References are those materials which are primarily concerned with the philosophy of teaching. Teacher Resources, on the other hand, address the practical application of such philosophies in the classroom.

Resources are targeted to levels (e.g., Primary), and within these are further designated as 'early', 'late', and, where required, by special audience such as ESL, gifted, or special needs. Future areas of need for learning resources are being identified and communicated to suppliers. Current lists will be updated through on going reviews.

Resources often have application to more than one curricular or topic area. Obvious connections are identified in annotations, but teachers will make many more connections as they work with materials in the spirit of integration. Indices in annotation documents assist in organizing by topics and categories. Electronic data files containing ordering and organizational information found in the annotations are sent to each district when the annotations are published. For example, if material is required at a particular reading level, or in a particular genre such as fairy tales and folk tales, these

descriptors may be used to search among the materials listed. Each district office may make copies of the database, as needed.

8. Catalogue of Learning Resources:

Currently, all authorized or recommended materials are listed in the *Catalogue of Learning Resources*, published annually by the Ministry. Prices are current as of the catalogue's publication date. In 1992, only resources available from the Ministry will be listed in the catalogue.

B. Local Selection of Resources

1. District Policies

As previously indicated, districts which choose to locally select materials for school use must have in place a district selection policy in accordance with section 182 (2) (e) of the School Act as outlined in Minister's Order #143. Selection policies have typically been in place with regard to selection of materials for school library collections which are outside the Ministry's mandate. Such selection policies should consider the provincial criteria outlined above and provide for some process of identification of material which is equitable and defensible. (A sample policy for selection of learning resources is provided in this package.)

2. Roles and Responsibilities

Users at the local level may choose to use provincially authorized or recommended resources, or they may choose resources which are not on the Ministry's list. There is also the option to develop materials at the local level to support provincial or locally developed curricula. Districts are expected to have in place a district selection policy and process for locally selected resources (see Sample Local Resource Selection Policy, Appendix 4).

It is suggested that local policy be available to teachers and parents in the districts and that it include the following elements:

- process for selection of resources from the recommended and authorized listings provided by the Ministry;
- rationale for district selection of resources not on the Ministry's authorized and recommended lists
- criteria used to evaluate resources;
- selection procedures/process; and
- identification of personnel with responsibilities for selection of resources and their roles.

3. Library Materials

Guidelines in regards to school library collections are published separately and are available under the title *Independent Learners*. Every teacher librarian in the province has received a copy of this document free of charge. For additional copies, please contact the Learning Resources Branch.

Part II: Challenges and Complaints

1. Provincially Authorized or Recommended Resources

Complaints concerning provincially authorized or recommended resources are referred to the Educational Resources Advisory Committee. This committee is comprised of representatives of stakeholder groups including parents, teachers, school administrators, school trustees, and superintendents. The responsibilities of this committee are outlined in the appended terms of reference and include the recommendation to the Ministry of appropriate action where warranted. Recommendation may include cautions to teachers, communication with publishers in regard to concerns, and delisting of materials if deemed inappropriate for school use. Information regarding recommendations is communicated to districts. Complainants also receive an individual response informing them of actions taken in regard to their complaint.

(a) Process

Complaints should be directed to the Learning Resources Branch of the Ministry. The Branch will acknowledge the complaint and refer it to the agenda of the next meeting of the Educational Resources Advisory Committee. The committee meets semi-annually, or more often if necessary, to address complaints received. Correspondence in regard to results of complaints will be directed to the name and address indicated on the complaint form with a copy to the district superintendent.

(b) Complaint Forms

Complainants should be provided with a copy of the form, *Inquiry Into Suitability of a Provincial Resource* (appended to this package). They can mail this form directly to the Learning Resources Branch of the Ministry.

2. Locally Selected Resources

Complaints concerning locally selected resources are dealt with at the local level. It is the responsibility of the district to have in place, as part of its resources selection policy guidelines, the process for dealing with complaints concerning library materials and other locally selected items used in schools in the district.

NOTES

Appendices

Educational Resource Materials Order #143 13

Evaluation Forms Used At The Provincial Level 14

Sample Annotation 19

Sample Local Resource Selection Policy 20

Terms of Reference, Educational Resources Advisory Committee 28

Complaint Form For Provincially Authorized or Recommended Resources 29

Copyright Information 32

Learning Resources Evaluation Guide

14

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE MATERIALS ORDER SCHEDULE

Authority: *School Act*, section 182 (2) (e)

Ministerial Order 143/89 (M143/89) ..... Effective September 1, 1989
Amended by M11/91 ..... Effective January 22, 1991
Orders of the Minister of Education

Educational resource materials

1. (1) In addition to the educational program guides referred to in Ministerial Order 183/90, the Educational Program Guide Order, a board may only use the following educational resource materials:

(a) the educational resource materials referred to as authorized or recommended in the most recent "Catalogue of Learning Resources, Primary to Graduation", published from time to time by the Ministry of Education;

(b) other educational resource materials that, subsequent to the publication of the Catalogue referred to in paragraph (a), are designated by the minister as authorized or recommended; and

(c) educational resource materials that the board considers are appropriate for individual students or groups of students.

(2) Where a board uses educational resource materials referred to in subsection 1(c), the board shall establish evaluation and selection criteria and procedures to approve those educational resource materials.

Province of British Columbia | Ministry of Education, Learning Resources Branch

First Cut Checklist

Please circle appropriate icon(s)

Games/ Manipulative

CODE (circle)
CF TF
MF OF AF
IF SF

GENERAL INFORMATION

Package Title _____ Preview No. _____

Curriculum Strand

❒ Humanities ❒ Sciences ❒ Practical Arts ❒ Fine Arts ❒ Cross Strand ❒ Other

Course _____ Topic _____

Level _____ Audience _____

RESOURCE SUITABILITY (check 5 = Excellent 4 = Good 3 = Average 2 = Poor 1 = Unacceptable)

CONTENT

5 4 3 2 1 Content is current

5 4 3 2 1 Content is accurate

5 4 3 2 1 Supports B.C. curriculum

METHODOLOGY (INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN)

5 4 3 2 1 Student material _____

5 4 3 2 1 Teacher material _____

INTENDED AUDIENCE

5 4 3 2 1 Level of difficulty is appropriate to intended audience

5 4 3 2 1 Student interest is promoted

TECHNICAL DESIGN

5 4 3 2 1 Modern appearance

5 4 3 2 1 Durable packaging

5 4 3 2 1 Effective design

5 4 3 2 1 Other _____

APPROPRIATE USE OF MEDIUM

5 4 3 2 1 Comments _____

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

❒ _____

_____ ❒ _____

OBVIOUS SOCIAL CONCERNS (Please see "Social Considerations" section of the Guide, page 14)

❒ _____

Consider Further? ❒ NO -please explain briefly ❒ YES ❒ REFER TO

_____

_____

Confidentiality: I understand that all information associated with this evaluation is confidential and is not to be communicated to anyone without the permission of the Learning Resources Branch.

_____ *signature of evaluator* _____ *signature of evaluator* _____ *date*

EDUC 06/91

Province of British Columbia
Ministry of Education
Learning Resources Branch

In-Depth Evaluation Form

CODE (circle)		MINISTRY USE ONLY
CI	TI	Over-All Rating
II	SI	

Descriptive Information

General Information

Package Title _____ Preview No. _____
Series Title _____ Copyright _____
Category _____ Subject _____
Topic _____ Subtopic _____
Audience _____ Level _____

Physical Format (complete only if final rating is acceptable or better)

please circle appropriate icon(s)

Multimedia Package Yes ❒ No ❒ Type of packaging _____

Print
Title _____ Author _____
Binding _____ Size _____
Number of Pages _____ Type style _____
Illustrations _____ Additional features _____

Video Title _____
VHS ❒ Other _____ Colour ❒ B&W ❒ Number of cassettes _____
Length (in minutes) _____ Style(s) of presentation _____

Audio Title _____
Narrator(s) _____ Number of cassettes _____
Length (in minutes) _____

Other
Title _____ Type _____

Software Title _____

Format	3.5" HD	5.25" HD	System	RAM	Required Hardware	Recommended Hardware
Apple II/GS						
MS-DOS						
Macintosh						
Amiga						
CD-ROM						
Videodisc						

HD: High Density

Documentation _____

Notes _____

REV 05/91

Media Resources Evaluation Checklist

For each of the following statements, check the square which best reflects your judgement of the program or package. If the statement is not applicable, stroke out all the boxes. Use the space following each item for comments.

	Strongly Agree / Strongly Disagree	Comments	Page Ref.
CONTENT		1. Content is current	6
		2. Content is accurate	6
		3. Supports B.C. curriculum	6
		4. Scope (range) and depth of topics is appropriate to learner needs	6
		5. Material has significant Canadian content.	6
		6. Level of difficulty is appropriate for intended audience	6
		7. Content integrates "real world" experiences	7
INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN		8. Instructional goals and learner objectives are clearly stated	7
		9. Suitable for a range of learning/teaching styles	8
		10. Promotes student engagement	8
		11. Promotes active learning	8
		12. Promotes communication skills	9
		13. Encourages group interaction	9
		14. Encourages student creativity	9
		15. Allows/encourages students to work independently	9
		16. Suitable for intended purpose	9
		17. Materials are well organized and structured	9
		18. Materials have unity/congruency	10
		19. Concepts are clearly introduced	10
		20. Concepts are clearly developed	10
		21. Concepts are clearly summarized	10
		22. Integration across curriculum strands is supported	10
		23. Non-technical vocabulary is appropriate	11
		24. Technical terms are consistently explained/introduced	11
		25. Pedagogy is innovative	11
		26. Adequate/appropriate follow-up activities are provided	11
		27. Adequate/appropriate assessment tools are provided	11
TECHNICAL DESIGN		28. Narration/text relates to visuals	12
		29. Appropriate support materials are provided	12
		30. Visual design is interesting	12
		31. Illustrations/visuals are effective/appropriate	13
		32. Character size/typeface is appropriate	13
		33. Layout is logical and consistent	13
		34. Users can easily employ package	13
		35. Package/design is suitable for the classroom	14
		36. Makes effective use of the media	14

Social considerations

For social considerations, consider whether the program or package addresses the following issues appropriately. Complete this section only after you have looked at the *entire* program or package, and make specific references of both good and bad examples. If the statement is not applicable, stroke out all the boxes. Use the space following each item for comments, or include comments and notes on a separate sheet.

SOCIAL CONSIDERATIONS	Appropriate	Inappropriate				Page Ref.
37. Gender equity/Role portrayal of sexes						15
38. References to belief systems						16
39. Age portrayals						16
40. Socio-economic references						17
41. Political bias						17
42. Regional bias						17
43. Multi-culturalism content						17
44. First Nations culture/roles						18
45. Portrayal of special needs						18
46. Ethical/legal issues						18
47. Language use						18
48. Portrayal of violence						18
49. Safety standards compliance						19

Describe the major strengths of the package. 19

Describe the major weaknesses of the package **OR** reason for rejection. 19

SUMMARY Circle 1= unacceptable 2= poor 3= acceptable 4= good 5= excellent

INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN 1 2 3 4 5

SOCIAL CONSIDERATIONS 1 2 3 4 5

CONTENT 1 2 3 4 5

TECHNICAL DESIGN 1 2 3 4 5

OVER-ALL RATING

- ☐ Excellent
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Average
- ☐ Poor
- ☐ Unacceptable

Draft Annotation (only complete this section for highly rated resources)

Page Ref.

General Description 19

Comments 20

Evaluator's Information

Confidentiality: I understand that all information associated with this evaluation is confidential and is not to be communicated to anyone without the permission of the Learning Resources Branch.

Evaluator's Name _____ Evaluator's Name _____

_____ _____

Signature of Evaluator *Signature of Evaluator*

_____ _____

Date *Date*

EARLY INTERMEDIATE SCIENCES Science

Title **Science Essentials: Light**

Author(s)	Order # see below	Cost: see below
Publisher: EBEC	ISBN # N/A	Copyright 1989
Distributor: Britannica Learning Materials	Audience: General	Edition
Available from Britannica Learning Materials	Category: Video	Level
Topic: Energy and Energy	Subtopic:	Status R

Physical Format

VHS video (32 min.), full-colour dramatization.
Teacher support pamphlet (10 x 17.5 cm), 6 pages.

General Description

This video is organized in four parts. All four have the same format explaining a scientific principle, doing experiments to promote understanding of the specific scientific principle and then showing the viewer where these principles are at work in our everyday lives. Innovative techniques are presented that have a direct tie with modern technology. Hands-on experiments are encouraged.

What is Colour? describes how objects reflect and absorb colour and explores prisms and colour spectrums. What is Light? describes how scientists view light waves and radiant energy forms as part of the electromagnetic spectrum. How Does Light Travel? explores the principles of light and how it travels usually in a straight path but can be diverted by reflection. How Do Lenses Work? illustrates the concepts of light changing direction due to reflection and refraction.

A teacher support pamphlet and student response sheet are available with the program and provide a brief overview with activity suggestions.

Comments

Each segment of the video could be used independently or together to reinforce concepts introduced in the classroom. The format encourages a start and stop technique to allow time for observation and discussion.

Light - Video	$20.00
Light - Teacher support pamphlet	$.60

SAMPLE SELECTION OF LEARNING RESOURCES POLICY

approved by the Board of School Trustees
of School District 39 (Vancouver)
revised on April 17, 1988

INTRODUCTION

At its meeting of April 17, 1978, the Board of School Trustees of School District 39 (Vancouver) approved unanimously the first version of this policy on the selection of learning resources. This revised policy was approved by the Board on 1987 November 16. The statement is consistent with new provincial regulations and procedures on curriculum responsibility.

PART I of the document states the policy on the selection of learning resources; provides a definition of learning resources and outlines the objectives of selection, criteria to be applied, procedures to be followed, as well as responsibility for the selection program.

PART II states the policy for dealing with challenged materials and provides guidelines for both an informal and formal reconsideration of a learning resource, as well as guiding principles for a reconsideration committee.

This policy is designed to explain how learning resources are selected for use in Vancouver schools and to provide for consideration of the opinions of those persons in the school and community who are not directly involved in the selection process.

PART I

Selection of Learning Resources:

I. STATEMENT OF POLICY

The policy of the Board of School Trustees of School District #39 (Vancouver) is to provide a wide range of learning resources at varying levels of difficulty, with diversity of appeal and the presentation of different points of view to meet the needs of students and teachers.

II. OBJECTIVES OF SELECTION

A. For the purposes of this statement of policy, the term "learning resources" will refer to any person(s) or any material (whether acquired or locally produced) with instructional content or function that is used for formal or informal teaching/learning purposes. Learning resources include textbooks, other books, supplementary reading and informational materials, charts, community resource people, agencies and organizations, dioramas, filmstrips, flash cards, games, globes, kits, machine readable data files, maps, microfilms, models, motion pictures, periodicals, pictures, realia, slides, sound recordings, transparencies and video recordings.

B. The primary objective of learning resources is to support, enrich and help to implement the educational program of the school through the interaction of professional personnel and other members of the school community. It is the duty of professional staff to provide students with a wide range of materials at varying levels of difficulty, with diversity of appeal and the presentation of different points of view.

C. To this end, the Board of School Trustees of School District #39 (Vancouver) affirms that it is the responsibility of its professional staff:

- To provide materials that will enrich and support the curriculum, taking into consideration the varied interests, abilities, learning styles and maturity levels of the students served;
- To provide materials that will stimulate growth in factual knowledge, literary appreciation, aesthetic values, and societal standards;
- To provide materials on various sides of controversial issues so that young citizens may have an opportunity to develop under guidance the practice of critical analysis and to make informed judgements in their daily lives;
- To provide materials representative of the many religious, ethnic, and cultural groups and their contributions to our national heritage and the world community;
- To place principle above personal opinion and reason above prejudice in the selection of materials of the highest quality in order to assure a comprehensive collection appropriate to the school community.

III. RESPONSIBILITY FOR SELECTION OF LEARNING RESOURCES

A. The Board of School Trustees delegates the responsibility for the selection of learning resources to the professional staff employed by the school system.

B. While selection of learning resources involves many people (administrators, teachers, students, community persons, resource centre personnel) the responsibility for coordinating the selection of school learning resources and making the recommendation for purchase rests with the principal and professional personnel.

IV. CRITERIA FOR SELECTION OF LEARNING RESOURCES

A. The following criteria will be used as they apply:

1. Learning resources shall support and be consistent with the general educational goals of the province and district and the aims and objectives of individual schools and specific courses.
2. Learning resources shall meet high standards of quality in factual content and presentation.
3. Learning resources shall be appropriate for the subject area and for the age, emotional development, ability level, learning styles and social development of the students for whom the materials are selected.
4. Learning resources shall have aesthetic, literary, and/or social values.
5. Physical format and appearance of learning resources shall be suitable for their intended use.
6. Learning resources chosen shall be developed by competent authors and producers.
7. Learning resources shall be designed to help students gain an awareness of our pluralistic society as well as an understanding of the many important contributions made to our civilization by women and minority and ethnic groups.
8. Learning resources shall be designed to motivate students and staff to examine their own attitudes and behaviours and to comprehend their own duties, responsibilities, rights and privileges as participating citizens in our society.
9. Learning resources shall be selected for their strengths rather than rejected for their weaknesses.
10. Biased or slanted learning resources may be provided to meet specific curriculum objectives; for example, to recognize propaganda and its purpose in a given context or to balance an argument.

B. The selection of learning resources on controversial issues will be directed towards maintaining a balanced collection representing various views.

Learning resources shall clarify historical and contemporary forces by presenting and analyzing intergroup tension and conflict objectively, placing emphasis on recognizing and understanding social and economic problems.

C. Emphasis will be placed on the selection of Canadian learning resources where appropriate. These resources include book and non-book learning materials by or about a Canadian person, about a region or event, and/or published or produced in Canada.

V. PROCEDURES FOR SELECTION OF LEARNING RESOURCES

A. In selecting learning resources, professional personnel will evaluate available resources and curriculum needs and will consult reputable, professionally prepared aids to selection and other appropriate sources. The actual resource will be examined whenever possible.

B. Recommendations for purchase involve administrators, teachers, students, district personnel and community persons, as appropriate.

C. Gift materials shall be judged by the criteria outlined and shall be accepted or rejected by those criteria.

D. Selection is an ongoing process which should include the removal of materials which are no longer appropriate according to the criteria for the selection of learning resources.

PART 2

Procedures For Dealing With Challenged Materials:

I. STATEMENT OF POLICY

Any resident or employee of the school district may formally challenge learning resources used in the district's educational program on the basis of appropriateness. This procedure is for the purpose of considering the opinions of those persons in the schools and the community who are not directly involved in the selection process.

II. REQUEST FOR INFORMAL RECONSIDERATION

A. The school receiving a complaint regarding a learning resource shall try to resolve the issue informally.

1. The principal or other appropriate staff shall explain to the questioner the school's selection procedure, criteria, and qualifications of those persons selecting the resource.
2. The principal or other appropriate staff shall explain the particular place the questioned resource occupies in the education program, its intended educational usefulness, and additional information regarding its use, or refer the party to someone who can identify and explain the use of the resource.
3. If the questioner wishes to file a formal challenge, a copy of the district Selection of Learning Resources policy and a Request for Reconsideration of Learning Resources form shall be mailed by the principal to the party concerned.

III. REQUEST FOR FORMAL RECONSIDERATION OF SCHOOL-BASED RESOURCES

A. Preliminary Procedures

1. Each school will keep on hand and make available Request for Reconsideration of Learning Resources forms. All formal objections to learning resources must be made on these forms.
2. The Request for Reconsideration of Learning Resources form shall be signed by the questioner and filed with the principal if the resource is in a school, or with the director of Program Services if the resources is in a district-based collection.
3. The assistant superintendent-area and the director of Program Services shall be informed by the principal of the formal complaint received.
4. The request for reconsideration of materials in school-based collections shall be referred to a reconsideration committee at the school level for re-evaluation of the resource.
5. Requests for reconsideration of materials in district-based collections shall be referred to the School Resource Centre Consultative Committee which will serve as the reconsideration committee. Examples of district-based collections include those of Media Services and Technology and Curriculum Resources (the Teachers' Professional Library, the Instructional Materials Display and the Processing Centre).

B. The Reconsideration Committee

1. Upon receipt of a request for formal reconsideration of a learning resource:

   a) For learning resources in school-based collections, the principal is responsible for:

      i) Consulting with the chairpersons of the staff committee council, school consultative committee and student council regarding the composition of the school reconsideration committee;
      ii) Forming the reconsideration committee. When appropriate, membership should include:
         - one member of the district staff chosen by the area assistant superintendent;
         - one member of the school teaching staff chosen by the school staff;
         - one member of the resource centre professional staff chosen by the resource centre professional staff;
         - one member of the school consultative committee chosen by the school consultative committee;
         - two students chosen by the student body.

      iii) Naming the convener of the reconsideration committee;
      iv) Establishing a meeting date as soon as possible after the complaint is received.

   b) For learning resources in district-based collections, the director of Program Services is responsible for establishing a meeting date as soon as possible after the complaint is received.

2. The reconsideration committee may choose to consult district support staff and/or community persons with related professional knowledge.

3. The reconsideration committee shall review the challenged resource and judge whether it conforms to the principles of selection outlined in the district's Selection of Learning Resources policy.

C. Resolution

1. The reconsideration committee shall proceed within these guidelines:

   a) Examine the challenged resource.
   b) Consider written submissions by community members in a session which includes an opportunity for committee members to question presenters.
   c) Determine professional acceptance by reading critical reviews of the resources.
   d) Weight values and faults and form opinions based on the material as a whole rather than on passages or sections taken out of context.
   e) Discuss the challenged resource in the context of the educational program.
   f) Discuss the challenged item with the individual questioner when appropriate.
   g) Determine a final recommendation in camera.
   h) Prepare a written report which will include the procedures followed, the minutes of meetings, and the rationale for the decision made by the committee.

2. The decision and rationale shall be discussed with the individual questioner and appropriate staff if requested.

3. For school-based collections, the written report shall be retained by the school principal, with copies forwarded to the head of Program Services and the assistant superintendent-area and the director of Program Services.

   For district-based collections, the written report shall be retained by the director of Program Services. In both cases, a minority report may also be filed.

4. Written reports, once filed, are confidential and available for examination by trustees and appropriate officials only.

5. The decision of the respective reconsideration committee is binding on the individual school, or for the district-based collection.

6. Notwithstanding any procedure outlined in this policy, the questioner shall have the right to appeal any decision of the reconsideration committee to the Board of School Trustees as the final review panel.

D. Guiding Principles

1. Any resident or employee of the school district may raise objection to learning resources used in a school's educational program despite the fact that the individuals selecting such resources were duly qualified to make the selection, followed the proper procedure, and observed the criteria for selecting learning resources.

2. The principal should review the selection and objection rules with the teaching staff at least annually. The staff should be reminded that the right to object to learning resources is one granted by policies enacted by the Board of School Trustees.

3. No parent has the right to determine reading, viewing or listening matter for students other than his/her own children.

4. Although it is the learning resources which are challenged, the principles of the freedom to read/listen/view must be defended as well.

5. Access to challenged material shall not be restricted during the reconsideration process.

6. The major criterion for the final decision is the appropriateness of the material for its intended educational use.

7. A decision to sustain a challenge shall not necessarily be interpreted as a judgement of irresponsibility on the part of the professionals involved in the original selection and/or use of the material.

IV. REQUEST FOR FORMAL RECONSIDERATION OF MATERIALS IN DISTRICT COLLECTIONS

A. Preliminary Procedures

1. The staff of each district resource centre (e.g. The Teachers' Professional Library, Media Services and Technology) will keep on hand and make available Request for Reconsideration of Learning Resources forms. All formal objections to learning resources must be made on these forms.

2. The Request for Reconsideration of Learning Resources form shall be signed by the questioner and filed with the Head of Program Services.

3. The request for reconsideration shall be referred to the Program and Staff Development Consultative Committee.

B. The Reconsideration Committee

1. The Program and Staff Development Consultative Committee shall constitute the reconsideration committee.

2. The reconsideration committee may choose to consult district support staff and/or community persons with related professional knowledge.

3. The reconsideration committee shall review the challenged resource and judge whether it conforms to the principles of selection outlined in the district's Selection of Learning Resources policy.

C. Resolution

1. The reconsideration committee shall proceed within these guidelines:

   a) Examine the challenged resource.
   b) Receive and consider written submissions and presentations by concerned community groups, in a public session which includes an opportunity for committee members to question presenters.
   c) Determine professional acceptance by reading critical reviews of the resource.
   d) Weight values and faults and form opinions based on the material as a whole rather than on passages or sections taken out of context.
   e) Discuss the challenged resource in the context of the educational program.
   f) Prepare a written report.

2. The written report shall be discussed with the individual questioner if requested.

3. The written report shall be retained by the Head of Program Services, with copies forwarded to the Deputy Superintendent and the supervising Coordinators. A minority report may also be filed.

4. Written reports, once filed, are confidential and available for examination by trustees and appropriate officials only.

5. The decision of the reconsideration committee is binding on the district resource collection.

6. Notwithstanding any procedure outlined in this policy, the questioner shall have the right to appeal any decision of the reconsideration committee to the Board of School Trustee as the final review panel.

D. Guiding Principles

The principles cited under III D, 1-7 shall apply.

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Purpose

The Educational Resources Advisory Committee's main function is to examine *"authorized"* and *"recommended"* resources and make recommendations to the Ministry of Education concerning the continued use of these materials.

Composition

The committee will be composed of representatives of the B.C. School Trustees Association, the B.C. Parent Teacher Home and School Federation, the B.C. Teachers Federation, the B.C. Principals and Vice-Principals Association, the Superintendents Association and the Ministry of Education. Other members may be added as required, for appropriate periods of time. The committee will be chaired by a Manager of the Learning Resources Branch.

PROCEDURES

Complaints

Complaints will be acknowledged and the complainant will be sent the form "Inquiry Into Suitability of a Learning Resource.

If the complainant wishes the resource to be reviewed by the committee, the chairperson will provide committee members with copies of the complaint and, if required, copies of the resource. In some instances where provision of material to each member is impractical (e.g. a major series), a copy of the material will be made available at the meeting of the committee.

Meetings

Meetings will be held twice a year if there are complaints to be discussed.

Reports

The committee's recommendations will be recorded and conveyed to the appropriate people, including the complainant, Ministry personnel and the field if appropriate.

Withdrawal of Learning Resources

In the event that the Ministry decides that a resource should be withdrawn, schools will be informed by circular and the learning resource will be deleted from the *Catalogue of Learning Resources*.

INQUIRY INTO SUITABILITY

OF A

LEARNING RESOURCE

(use additional space where necessary)

Title of Resource _____

_____

Context of Usage: Classroom Resource: ____ Correspondence Material: ____
Other: _____

Author(s) _____

Publisher/Year: _____

Request initiated by : _____

Role of Complainant: Teacher __ Parent __ Other (please specify) _____

Telephone No.: _____

Address: _____

_____

1. To what in the resource(s) do you object? _____

_____

_____

a) pages _____ Specific Objection: _____

_____

b) pages _____ Specific Objection: _____

_____

c) pages _____ Specific Objection: _____

_____

d) pages _____ Specific Objection: _____

_____

2. What do you think is the theme or purpose of the resource? _____

_____

_____

3. What effect do you believe this resource would have on your son or daughter? _____

_____

_____

4. What effect do you believe this resource would have on other students? _____

_____

_____

5. Have you reviewed the entire resource? _____

_____

_____

6. In many cases, the impact of a resource will vary according to how it is presented and interpreted in the classroom, and we urge you to discuss this material with the appropriate people. Have you discussed the resource with the:

teacher? _____

_____

school district
staff: _____

What was their
response? _____

_____

_____

_____

7. Have you read reviews of this resource? Yes ___ No ___

Source of reviews? (attached photocopies if
available?) _____

If reviews are available, would you like copies? Yes ___ No ___

_____

_____

_____

_____

8. Additional
Comments: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Copyright Information

Copyright protection applies to all formats of materials including print, audio, video, and computer software. Responsibility for appropriate safeguards rests with the user of materials. Modification or duplication of materials without permission of the copyright holder infringes copyright.

As a general rule copyright lasts for an author's lifetime plus 50 years. After that time works fall into the public domain and may be duplicated.

In British Columbia rights for all videos provincially recommended are purchased by the province for use in British Columbia schools. For old titles, some contractual agreements require erasure after expiry date of rights. This information is communicated to districts by the Learning Resources Branch. Newly acquired titles will not need to be erased as contracts now include a "non-erasure" clause.

Computer software, like print, is protected for the life of the author plus 50 years. A school or teacher may negotiate a single copy purchase (single backup copy may be made) or a site licence which allows for a number of users to access a program. For further details on site licensing, contact the Learning Resources Branch.

LEARNING RESOURCES EVALUATION GUIDE

Learning Resources Branch
878 Viewfield Road
Victoria, B.C.
(604) 387-5331

Learning Resources Evaluation Guide

Table of Contents

Introduction 1
- Purpose 1
- Identification and Evaluation Forms 1
- Special Needs Audiences (Terminology 2

First Cut Checklist 2
- General Information 2
- Resource Suitability 2

In-Depth Evaluation Form 3
- Descriptive Information 3
  - General Information 3
  - Physical Format 3
- In-Depth Evaluation Checklist 4
  - General Instructions and Suggestions 5
  - Content 6
  - Instructional Design 7
  - Technical Design 12
  - Social Considerations 14
  - Summary 19
- Draft Annotation 19
  - General Description 19
  - General Comments 20

Appendix A Evaluation Criteria 21

Introduction

It is the responsibility of the Learning Resources Branch, in conjunction with teacher evaluators, to identify, evaluate and recommend educational materials to support specific curricula and educational programs. As a result of the increased use of various media in education, it is important that the Ministry be able to critically and effectively evaluate potential resources regardless of medium. Three forms, along with this guide, have been developed to assist in the evaluation process.

Purpose

This guide is designed to:

- assist the evaluator in passing judgement on specified aspects of potential resource materials
- assist evaluators in summarizing their analysis of the package as a whole
- acquaint all those involved in resource selection with the Learning Resources Branch evaluation process and the specific evaluation criteria used therein

Identification and Evaluation Forms

Three forms serve as the main tools of the selection process. Used together, they are designed to help select materials and to provide precise information for cataloguing. The forms are designed to cover all media types and thus, do not contain media-specific references. Each form has a specific function:

1. Identification Form

When responding to a call, the publisher/distributor completes this form and attaches it to each resource package submitted to the Ministry for evaluation.

2. First Cut Evaluation Form

Using this tool the evaluators will, based on pre-determined criteria, select resources for in-depth evaluation and identify reasons for rejection at this stage.

3. In-Depth Evaluation Form

Used in conjunction with this guide, this form will:

- help the evaluators complete a systematic and thorough analysis of the package
- verify the content of the *Identification Form*
- help to rank packages for selection
- serve as a permanent record of the evaluation to be kept on file at the Learning Resources Branch
- produce information for drafting an annotation which describes the resource.

Special Needs Audiences (Terminology);

MMH: Students with mild mental handicaps, based on measures of current intellectual performance and observations of delayed adaptive behaviour.

LD: Students with learning disabilities (i.e., disorders manifested by difficulties in the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning or mathematical abilities).

Gifted: Students who give evidence of high performance capability in areas such as intellect, creativity, or specific academic disciplines.

First Cut Checklist

Note:

- the term "**package**" will be used throughout to denote all components of a potential resource, whether it consists of a single component or a full range of media.

At this stage of the evaluation process, evaluators are identifying resources which are obviously inappropriate based on the criteria listed below. If in doubt about the suitability of a package, it is expected that the package will move on to in-depth evaluation.

General Information

In this section it is necessary to complete the following information:

- package title
- icon (media format)
- curriculum strand
- course (i.e.,. Language Arts)
- topic (i.e.,. Reading)
- level (i.e., Early Primary)
- audience (i.e., Regular, Gifted)

Resource Suitability

In this section indicate the appropriate numerical rating (1=poor, 5=excellent) for the following areas:

- curriculum fit
- methodology
- intended audience
- technical design
- appropriate use of medium

In addition, evaluators are requested to consider other factors and to make a brief note of their concerns.

- obvious social concerns - again evaluators are requested to make note of these and to include the page reference where applicable.

After careful completion of the form, evaluators are able to judge whether the package warrants an in-depth evaluation.

First cut checklists must be signed and dated.

In-Depth Evaluation Form

Descriptive Information

The first page of the form consists of descriptive information about the resource package.

General Information

This section combines information from publishers, distributors, producers, and Ministry staff for the purpose of classifying/cataloging resources. You may be asked to supply/verify portions of this section, depending upon the specific criteria of your particular evaluation.

Physical Format

Only complete this section for resources whose final rating is acceptable or better.

This section will be included in the annotation and provides useful information for teachers to assist them in selecting resources.

If there is more than one component of the same medium (e.g., student book/teacher guide), please complete the sheet Descriptive Information - Additional Component. Be sure to indicate the title of the resource on this additional sheet.

Multimedia

This resource package contains components of different media. Describe each component separately in the appropriate section (e.g., book and video). Circle the appropriate icon. Packages may be represented by more than one icon.

If there is more than one component of the same medium (.e.g., student book/teacher guide), please complete a "Descriptive Information - Additional Component" sheet. Be sure to indicate the title of the resource on this second sheet.

Type of Packaging

If there is any packaging, indicate its form. Examples include *slip-case, box, shrink-wrap, metal tube, plastic case.*

Print

Indicate if *soft* or *hardcover*. Other descriptors may include *looseleaf, three-hole punched, coilbound*, etc.

Number of pages: Indicate.

Size: Measure width by length, in cm.

Type Style: Only comment if there are unusual features or variations in style.

Illustrations: Indicate quantity, colour and kind. In order to maintain consistency, use the terms *infrequent, occasional, frequent*, or *numerous* for quantity. Indicate whether *b/w* or *full-colour*. Various descriptors for kind may include *photographs, artist's drawings, maps, charts* etc..

Video

Indicate format, length of program (in min.) and the number of cassettes. Style of presentation could include *documentary, animation,* and/or *dramatization.*

Audio

Identify the narrator(s) *as male/female; adult/child*. Indicate the length of the program, in minutes, and the number of cassettes.

Other

This section is for games, manipulatives, and other items that are not described elsewhere. Provide dimensions, number of pieces, or other information describing the nature and contents of the package.

Software

3.5"/ 5.25"(HD) Fill in the number of diskettes under the appropriate column.

Write in the earliest operating system version required to operate the program (e.g., DOS 3.2).

RAM: Write in the amount of RAM required, expressed as K or MB.

The "Required Hardware" and "Recommended Hardware" information is usually found on the software carton or in the manuals.

Documentation: Indicate the nature of supporting materials provided in the package (e.g., *templates, reference card or guides, installation manuals),* etc. Size, binding, number of pages, etc. should be provided.

In-Depth Evaluation Checklist

In-depth evaluations are completed by groups of evaluators who compare judgements and submit one form representing the group opinion. Depending on the type of material, your group may use one form or combine information from individual forms into a composite form which is signed by the recorder on behalf of the group.

This section requires you to think critically about the package and pass judgement on some of its more detailed aspects. You will also be asked to weigh the relative importance of these aspects and to summarize your findings.

The following descriptions are intended to be suggestions for consideration while you are attempting to reach a decision on each item. The list is not exhaustive nor are the items listed in order of importance.

You will rate items 1 through 49 on a four point scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". In most cases, you will probably mark one of the untitled boxes representing "agree" or "disagree". If you choose one of the more extreme judgements, be sure to provide a specific example in the *Comments* column, accompanied by a page or time reference. If the item does not apply, draw a line through all the boxes to indicate you have noted it and are eliminating it from the checklist.

Your judgements should be based on a thorough investigation of the package.

General Instructions and Suggestions

Previewing

- familiarize yourself with the entire form prior to use; refer to this guide where necessary for explanation of terms
- make sure that you have access to all parts of the resource package and the equipment necessary to examine it

Examining

- examine, skim, manipulate, scan, question
- approach the material as appropriate for teacher or students
- unless the material is clearly unsuitable for a specific reason such as social considerations, you should examine it in its entirety
- take brief notes on salient points while maintaining involvement in the material, particularly when examining videos or microware. Once you are familiar with the criteria on the form, you might make these notes under simple headings, (e.g., strengths, weaknesses, social considerations), to refer back to while completing the form

Recording The Evaluation

- fill in the form as completely as possible
- mark the *one* square which best reflects your judgement of each aspect of the material
- use specific examples wherever possible
- if the statement does not apply, draw a line through all the boxes
- if you are unclear on a point, even after referring to this guide, ask your coordinator for assistance
- complete your written evaluation immediately following each examination. Experience shows that evaluation quality suffers if you try to evaluate several resources at once and then write an evaluation on each
- re-read your completed evaluation to confirm it, or make changes in order that your assessment may be as fair and thorough as possible. Confirm your judgements with fellow evaluators before submitting a completed evaluation from your group on the material.

Content

While important, curriculum fit is only one of several considerations. Other criteria will be determined in advance of the call according to the objectives of the resource program.

1. Content is current

The package is not dated in its content, language or visuals in a way that reduces its educational value. Consider:

- hairstyles, pop idols, evident family lifestyles, fads, etc.
- information and models, (e.g., extinction of the dinosaurs theory should include comet collision)

2. Content is accurate

Possible problems in content accuracy include:

- outdated information
- factual errors
- improper use of statistics
- inaccurate graphs or displays
- invalid or oversimplified models, examples or simulations
- errors in spelling or grammar

3. Supports B.C. curriculum

The topics and approaches to teaching of content fit the program and curriculum needs. Material may support curricula in varying degrees depending on its scope but it should not compromise goals or reflect inappropriate objectives.

4. Scope (range) and depth of topics is appropriate to learner needs

Treatment of topics satisfies curriculum objectives, and at an appropriate level of detail. Keep in mind that overview materials which treat a wide range of topics will necessarily sacrifice depth and may require augmentation with additional materials.

Gifted/MMH/LD: Criterion #4 is particularly important.

5. Material has significant Canadian content

In the package's treatment of the main topics, Canada, if not the main focus, is prominently featured in references, examples, analogies, maps and data.

6. Level of difficulty is appropriate for intended audience

Concepts, visuals, vocabulary, and internal structure are developmentally appropriate and are meaningful to a broad range of abilities and achievement levels and are not so high or low as to confuse and frustrate learners. Some considerations:

- the readability of the student and support materials is consistent with the expected ability level of the audience (e.g., vocabulary, phrasing and sentence length)
- the size of steps are logical and well suited to the intended ability levels
- there are multiple levels of instruction to provide for individual differences in learners
- examples and graphic illustrations are suitable for the maturity age, and/or developmental level of the student
- in microware, the means of learner response is appropriate (e.g., multiple choice, single key-stroke, manipulation of graphics).

MMH: Look for a high degree of redundancy. Concepts should be systematically presented one at a time, at a concrete level. Concept presentation should represent simple objects such as toys and clothing and the children themselves. Photographs and realistic drawings should be used to support the introduction and development of concept learning.

MMH/LD: Sentence patterns should not be too complex, but be alert to attempts to simplify by omitting needed connections between ideas. Unusual or unpredictable sentence patterns and the use of long, involved sentences will increase the reading difficulty. Signal words (but, although, since,...) are associated with contrast, negation, and time and may not be well understood. Pronoun referents should be clear. Topic sentences should be placed at the beginning or end of paragraphs, and paragraphs should be cohesive and have a main point.

Gifted: There should be a low degree of redundancy; higher range of difficulty.

Gifted/MMH/LD: Criterion #6 is particularly important.

7. Content integrates 'real world' experiences

Content which supports the integration of personal, familial, and cultural contexts of our society is often more meaningful for many students. Links with real world activities are incorporated.

MMH/LD: The experience of the individual student should form the context for learning. Drill and practice should be incorporated into meaningful settings and activities.

MMH: The resource is concrete in nature and provides hands-on experiences.

Gifted: A variety of contexts may be applicable.

Instructional Design

To evaluate the package, begin with the instructional objectives and work through the methodology. Judge the items below based on their contribution to the overall objectives of the package.

8. Instructional goals and learner objectives are clearly stated

Is the overall purpose of the package concisely stated, if appropriate, with specific objectives stated for specific components? Based on your experience, you must judge if it would succeed.

- the statements should be explicit rather than inferred, succinct, free of jargon and unambiguous
- the information should be accessible - usually in the support materials
- the clear identification of objectives is critical to the transferability and implementation of a package.

MMH/LD: Objectives should be explicit and clearly identifiable by students.

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9. Suitable for a range of learning/teaching styles.

Uses a variety of approaches and is flexible in their application (e.g., encourages teacher intervention, student contributions, co-operative learning, discovery learning, collaborative teaching).

Materials and suggested activities encourage the use of a variety of learning styles and strategies (e.g., concrete, abstract, oral, written, multi-sensory).

MMH/LD: Appropriate learning strategies include explicit aids for remembering. A variety of drill and practice activities should be incorporated into meaningful settings and activities.

MMH: The resource should support over-learning in order to promote retention.

LD: The resource supports or consists of integrated multi-sensory components.

Gifted: Materials should promote discussion in order to facilitate generalization and transfer of concepts. Resources should provide opportunities for discovery.

10. Promotes student engagement

Focusing techniques and cuing devices are included. The resource incorporates aids to accessibility (advance organizers, summaries). Questions engage the student in reflection. Questions and activities within the resource adequately and appropriately attract attention and increase understanding.

MMH/LD: The learner should be told to focus ("See how the boy..."). Reflective questions should focus on fundamental knowledge. Cuing devices should be used to attract attention to specific points (variations in typeface, boxes, underlining, spacing). Advance organizers and summaries should be provided.

LD: The resource should have a content overview, if required.

Gifted: Students should be led to question, think, react, and reflect.

11. Promotes active learning

The methodology includes critical thinking, research skills, problem solving, group decision making, etc. The learner assumes increased responsibility for learning.

MMH: The number of decision options should be limited and each decision should have a concrete resolution (closure). The number of response choices should be narrow.

Gifted: The material poses problems which have multiple solutions. A number of decision options may be provided which are open ended, and/or negotiable. Materials should facilitate critical thinking skills and creative problem solving.

Gifted/MMH/LD: Criterion #11 is particularly important.

12. *Promotes communication skills*

The methodology includes activities which encourage student self-expression and interaction (e.g., debate, static display, construction, pamphlet writing, small group discussion).

- develops/promotes visual, auditory and writing skills

13. *Encourages group interaction*

Uses group based learning methods such as cross-ability groups, collaborative learning.

14. *Encourages student creativity*

Use of the package encourages the student to develop unique interpretations or solutions.

Gifted: Criterion #14 is particularly important.

15. *Encourages the learner to work independently*

The student has some measure of control over the rate and difficulty of presentation and review. For example, the student can:

- vary the amount of material
- vary the time allowed for solving problems
- explore rather than be locked into a linear instructional sequence
- begin, continue, and end at an appropriate level
- check for mastery at appropriate points

LD: The resource encourages or allows learners to have sufficient processing time. This is often a concern with video and audio media.

Gifted: These learners can often accommodate to a faster pace.

16. *Suitable for intended purpose* The package offers a means to the end (specified by the instructional objectives).

17. *Materials are well organized and structured*

The order in which the information is presented is logical and suited to the subject and objectives. In both the teacher and student materials the tasks are clearly defined and the information is accessible to a diverse range of abilities and achievement levels.

- tables of contents should indicate consistency in approach to topics, units etc. Balance among topics should be considered
- coordination among components, including overview charts, graphics and other visual organizers are helpful in large series or programs
- cross-references to supporting or supplementary aspects of a package which show how they fit within the organizational framework will facilitate ease of use of the package

MMH/LD: Introductions, headings, and subheadings help clarify content for these audiences. In addition, features such as a table of contents, index, glossary, chapter, and topic titles which reflect content are important reading aids for all users but especially important for this audience.

18. Materials have unity/congruity

The package holds together as a self-contained unit. Content, methodology, and means of evaluation correspond to the overall purpose.

19. Concepts are clearly introduced

The progression of the presentation is smooth and logical, with new concepts identified in a clear and consistent manner and criteria for mastery identified as appropriate.

Gifted: Ideas should be logically developed, presented, and expanded. A more abstract manner of presentation can be used.

20. Concepts are clearly developed

Definitions, explanations, illustrations, and examples are available where necessary and are relevant to the point under discussion.

- material includes links to and/or develops from previously acquired knowledge
- examples as well as non-examples or counter-examples are provided ("This is a bear, this is not a bear.")

MMH: Tasks are broken down into small sequential steps.

MMH/LD: Devices should be available which assist in interpreting, explaining, or defining terms. Alternate representations of the same content are provided. Criterion #20 is particularly important.

21. Concepts are clearly summarized

A summary may come in many forms ,(e.g., an end of chapter list, synthesis activities, a post-lesson quiz, a handout, focused questions).

MMH/LD: Summaries should help clarify content for these populations.

22. Integration across the curriculum strands is supported

In accordance with the recommendations of the Sullivan Commission, new materials should be flexible enough in both content and presentation for use in a classroom integrating several subjects within a strand. The strands are:

- Humanities (Language Arts, Learning for Living, Social Studies)
- Sciences (Science, Mathematics)
- Practical Arts (Bus. Ed., Home Ec., Physical Ed.)
- Fine Arts (Art, Drama, Dance, Music)

23. *Non-technical vocabulary is appropriate*

Consider:

- the overall vocabulary load
- the purpose for reading, listening or viewing
- the sophistication of the ideas presented
- the context (sentence complexity)
- the level of concreteness/abstraction
- the use of idiom and dialect
- user support (e.g., examples, illustrations, glossaries)

MMH/LD: The use of idiom and dialect increases comprehension difficulty.

Gifted: The use of idiom and dialect extends and/or enriches meaning.

Gifted/MMH/LD: Criterion #23 is especially important.

24. *Technical terms are consistently explained/introduced*

Consider:

- consistent presentation (e.g., in boldface, pause for explanation, accompanied by illustrative examples)
- learner support (e.g., glossaries, an index, advanced organizers, post-lesson summary)

25. *Pedagogy is innovative and motivational*

Demonstrates fresh approaches and tailors each to the topic at hand. Imagery, layout, presentation, pace, and topics selected all serve to promote student interest in the content.

- contains some emotional appeal
- the student should be left with a positive attitude toward the material and, in the case of interactive learning tools such as microware, a desire to use the package again
- students are motivated to learn

26. *Adequate/appropriate follow-up activities are provided*

The material provides activities outside the main body of the lesson(s) which should serve to reiterate the stated learning objectives and reinforce key aspects of the package (e.g., homework activities, review quizzes, supplementary exercises, links to current affairs, off-computer activities). Links with real world activities are incorporated. Activities can be used for formative evaluation.

27. *Adequate/appropriate assessment tools are provided*

The package, contains tools to help both the student and teacher assess learner's readiness, progress and achievement relative to the program's objectives (e.g., on-screen questions in a video, a quiz built into a microware program, suggested questions in the teacher's guide, self-directed review).

- if learning management (e.g. , pretest and posttest) is used, please describe it briefly

- consider provisions for remediation of identified areas of weakness

Gifted/MMH/LD: The resource provides tools for student self-assessment.

Technical Design

When evaluating the technical quality of a package, bear in mind that the resource should be identical in quality to that to be distributed to schools.

28. Narration/text relates to visuals

What is said or written should clearly correspond to what is shown. Captions should be clear and relevant.

LD: Visuals should be placed to effectively support textual content and not interrupt reading, viewing, or using unnecessarily.

Gifted/MMH/LD: Criterion #28 is particularly important.

29. *Appropriate support materials are provided*

Assess the completeness of the package, in terms of its support for the teacher's and student's achievement of the objectives, and reasonable optional uses Support materials are particularly important to the effective use of microware and videos. The use of all components should be clearly identified. Some characteristics of good support materials are:

- for **students**:
  - sufficient material for a variety of activities including pre-instruction and follow-up
- for **teachers**:
  - a description of the instructional activities and overview of how these relate to each other and to the package goals; prerequisite skills; a rationale for the use of media other than print
- **resource information**
  - a bibliography of resources and references related to the topic; possibilities for package modification
- **technical documentation** (mandatory for microware)
  - detailed explanation of how the equipment is to operate
- **containers** - equipment for organizing and storing the entire package if not available and are required, please note.

MMH/LD: Criterion #29 is particularly important.

30. Visual design is interesting/effective

Regardless of the content and medium, the actual presentation of the information will appeal to, and enhance effective use for, both students and teachers. Graphics, colour and sound enhance rather than detract from the learning process; they draw the learner's attention to important points. The materials should be visually clear with good visual contrast, in multi-level or multi-component packages. Coordination of components is facilitated by colour coding, number sequencing, etc., of individual items.

31. *Illustrations/Visuals are effective/appropriate*

The illustrations focus attention on the important content areas and are appropriate to the student's maturity level. They should be clear.

MMH/LD: Visuals should not be too dark or too cluttered and should not have competing elements. A variety of different types of visuals are used to support and represent concepts (flow charts, webs, diagrams, tables).

LD: visuals should be of appropriate size and facilitate enlargement with minimal loss of clarity.

Gifted/MMH/LD: Criterion #31 is particularly important.

32. *Character size/typeface is appropriate*

Material uses effective typographic design in the main body of text, captions indices, diagrams etc. Cuing devices should be used to attract attention to specific points (variations in typeface, boxes, underlining, spacing). The hierarchy of information and the relationship among ideas should be clearly communicated through effective and efficient use of contrasting print size and style.

LD: Left justification is preferred. Font variation should only be used as a cuing device.

33. *Layout is logical and consistent*

The material is presented in a well-organized, consistent and predictable fashion. The structure is apparent to the user in the table of contents and in consistent organization of limits of work or study.

MMH/LD: Layout should be consistent from page to page.

LD: Layout should feature appropriate use of text, visuals, and backgrounds. The structure should not be distracting.

34. *Users can easily employ package*

The package should be easily used and understood by both the teacher and student. Envision an instructional situation in which the package could be easily employed.
Consider:

- if desirable, the teacher can control pace and difficulty levels
- an appropriate number of prerequisites are identified
- equipment set-up is adequately explained or demonstrated
- materials are easily used in the space typically available
- materials, activities, lessons, etc. are easily adaptable to a variety of classroom environments
- directions are accompanied by useful examples
- thorough and easy-to-use manuals are provided
- package can't be easily misused
- contains no inappropriately hazardous materials

MMH/LD: Students should be provided with "how to use", "how to read", "how to approach/study information" aids, as appropriate.

35 *Packaging/design is suitable for the classroom*

Consider:

- the quality of the paper, packaging, or binding is appropriate to its intended use and expected life
- the text, captions, labels, pictures, diagrams are attractive, clear and free of errors
- components are packaged for easy access (e.g., "loose leaf" worksheets designed for reproduction, teacher materials can be separated from student materials)
- provides containers for storing all components if needed

36. *Makes effective use of the media*

Each medium (e.g., video, microware, print) used in the package should take full advantage of the unique aspects of that technology. Consider whether the subject matter could be better handled by other means; whether the instructional objective is best served by each medium chosen. This consideration is critical in the case of video and microware where maximum use should be made of visuals, sound and interaction.

Consider:

- some bad examples:
  - a slide show on video ; "electronic notebook" microware programs ; an overhead transparency of a large body of finely printed text
- some good examples: video combining contemporary or historical footage with live drama ; microware that simulates activities too expensive or dangerous for the classroom

Social Considerations

In this section your purpose is to identify potential concerns that appear in the content or presentation. Final judgements as to the suitability of the package, based on your descriptions, will be made by the Ministry of Education.

The intent of the screening process is not to remove controversy, but rather to permit controversial views and opinions to be presented within the following framework:

- alternative points of view presented as appropriate
- clear purpose in presenting alternative points of view
- suitable for maturity level of the audience
- reflects a range of community standards. You should identify evidence of balance as well as imbalance, and areas of potential concern. **Note that the rating scale has been altered** as follows:
- *appropriate* = evidence of balance
- *questionable* = area of potential concern
- *inappropriate* = evidence of imbalance

Overall, the materials should emphasize positive characteristics and role models.
The items below comprise the social considerations analysis. Describe detailed evidence and unique considerations in the space below the items or on a separate sheet. The items are not listed in order of importance. For all of the items, consider:

- the intended audience and the context of usage
  - subject area and the maturity of the audience may affect the suitability of the material (e.g., a video on reproduction),
  - is it designed for teacher directed use or self- directed student use?
  - if students are exposed to controversial points of view, consider them in the context of the package as a whole (e.g., a video of the play The Taming of the Shrew)
- the setting, the time period, political and social context, and geographic location are features that provide insight into potential concerns (i.e., it is not valid to impose present values on Molière's work)
- the writer's tone toward the subject matter or audience. These attitudes tend to influence all aspects of the package
- an error by omission. This may be difficult to identify but note that the writer may identify an error and clarify his/her reasoning for it
- the extent of the reference. Where a controversial reference occurs, you should indicate how much attention it might receive
- the frequency of occurrence

Although you should thoroughly examine both the teacher's and student's materials, use your judgement in selecting examples to record. Whenever in doubt, **provide the example. Always include page or screen references for all noted concerns and examples.**

37. *Gender equity/Role portrayals of the sexes*

Consider portrayal of the personal traits and circumstances, attitudes and actions of males and females in regard to the following:

1. Frequency of portrayal of each sex:

Desirable:

- deliberately balanced representation of each sex in illustrations, texts, examples, activities and assignments

Undesirable:

- Emphasis of one sex to the reduction or exclusion of the other.

2. Diversity of roles and relations for each sex:

Desirable:

- a variety of modes of behaviour for both sexes such as active, passive, cooperative, collaborative, expressive, competitive .

Undesirable

- stereotypes that imply one sex is more suited than the other to a role or activity.
- generalizations that assume any personal trait to be based on sex.

3. Historical invisibility of the contributions, experiences and perspectives of girls and women.

Desirable:

- acknowledgement/analysis of current and historical inequities such as power, economics and ascribed values between the sexes
- recent scholarship which identifies the contributions, experiences and perspectives of girls and women.

Undesirable:

- male defined scholarship such as history:war and politics, scientific method:positivism, child development:Piaget's studies of boys, philosophy:"The Ascent of Man".

4. Gender sensitive language, which is specific when appropriate and inclusive whenever possible.

Desirable:

- elimination of gender bias.

Undesirable:

- sexist, abusive and discriminatory language, including derogatory reference to sexual orientation.

38. References to belief systems

This refers to the presentation of organized sets of doctrines or ideas (e.g., philosophies, religions, political ideologies). The material should neither overstate nor denigrate. Attitudes to a belief system emerge in the personal traits, circumstances, attitudes and actions of adherents.

Consider:

- how members or groups are presented (e.g., appearance, socio-economic status, activities)
- stereotyping and descriptive language used
- generalizations (all liberals; all politicians).
- clear distinction between facts and opinions
- note instances of "group" stereotyping or classification

39. Age portrayals

The way members of different age groups are presented and society's treatment of them.

Consider:

- the different age groups represented
- stereotyping and descriptive language used
- the inclusion of views of older people or about older people
- relationships (e.g., parent-child, age integrated activities)
- how the aged are portrayed (i.e., valuable contributors to society)

40. Socio -economic references

Be alert to biases/values and perspectives concerning income. These may include analogies and examples in problems or situations depicted (e.g., spending money; presumed access to automobile by teenagers). What assumptions are made about family structure? Are these reflective of today's society?

41. Political bias

One or more political points of view are stated or advocated at the expense of others.

- sensitive areas may include labour relations, environmental issues, regional disputes (e.g., land use, elections)
- consider/comment on appropriateness and concerns

42. Regional bias

This refers to the exclusion of one geographical region in favour of another, where relevant. This is particularly evident in materials developed in the United States or eastern Canada.
Consider:

- general bias (e.g., a Canadian studies text that concentrates on the exploration of the "East")
- focused bias (i.e., in statistics, maps and examples)
- to what extent does this bias affect usefulness of material (i.e., non-metric material is not usually acceptable for B.C.)

43. Multiculturalism content

The effective promotion of a positive multicultural environment is desirable. The way in which cultures are presented is more important than mere appropriate representation.
Consider:

- the total human aspect of the culture is examined, not just the exotic
- the culture is examined from within, rather than from an ethnocentric point of view (i.e., not "we - they")
- visuals present a ratio of visible minorities corresponding to that of the society portrayed
- similarities among cultures and differences within groups are pointed out
- evidence of stereotyping, (e.g., socio-economic class, personality, language use)
- the degree to which respect is shown for the language and culture of all peoples (e.g., references to dialect, customs, dress and diet are seen as positive attributes and not as deficits to overcome)
- the customs, lifestyles, traditions of all races, religions and cultures represented should be treated in a manner that recognizes their role, value and meaning in the life of each race and culture
- people of all races, religions and cultures are shown as capable of making decisions concerning their own development and the important issues that affect their lives
- portrayal of minorities as positive role models (e.g., holding a variety of positions at every level in society)
- similarities amongst cultures and differences within ethnocultural groups are acknowledged

44. First Nations culture/roles

The effective promotion of a balanced and realistic view of First Nations people and their culture is desirable.
Consider:

- the total human aspect of First Nations culture is examined, not just the stereotypical or exotic
- the culture is examined from within rather from an ethnocentric point of view (i.e., not "we - they")
- First Nations people are portrayed across a range of socio-economic classes in a variety of roles
- the power relationships between native groups or individuals and others
- undue emphasis on particular problems or conflicts involving native groups

45. Portrayal of special needs

The effective promotion of awareness of the capabilities and contributions of children and adults with special needs and their integration into education and society is desirable.
Consider:

- the nature of the special need presented
- a representation of natural proportions found in populations
- the contexts in which people with special needs are presented. (e.g., stereotyping)

46. Ethical/legal issues

Issues subject to debate on moral or legal grounds should be examined closely. Consider accuracy and currency of data and evaluate for bias. Prominent examples include:

- abortion
- use/abuse or legalization of drugs
- prostitution, pornography
- nuclear weapons/energy
- evolution versus creationism
- land use issues

47. Language use

The use of specialized language **should be suited to both the context and the maturity and intellectual level** of the audience. Consider carefully the use of the following and note specific examples:

- trendy language that may date quickly ,(e.g., Bill and Ted's "Excellent" Adventure)
- profanity
- racist or pejorative terms (e.g., squaw)
- slang, jargon, or dialect incorrect grammar
- the frequency of occurrence (e.g., frequent, occasional, rare), is a factor in judgement, but even one statement may preclude use depending on its nature.
- gender biased language (e.g., shrew; sportsmanship)

48. Portrayal of violence

Incidences of violence, where presented, should contribute to the content in some way and should be suited to both the context and the maturity level of the audience.
Consider:

- types of violence , (e.g., physical/emotional, shock or horror, verbal abuse, violence against animals)
- presentation and function ,(e.g., discrete, sensationalistic
- explicitness, e.g., inferred, graphic)
- participants

49. Safety standards compliance

Activities portrayed should comply with community standards of safe practice and common sense. Some considerations:

- equipment use (e.g., physical education class)
- materials handling,(e.g., chemicals, pottery, electronics
- lab procedures)
- adequacy of directions/instructions for safe use of materials.

Summary

Upon completing items 1 through 49 you should be able to assign a rating to indicate your opinion of the quality of the package according to each section of criteria. Keep in mind, as you scan the columns of check marks and re-read your comments, that the items are not necessarily equally weighted

Describe the major strengths/weaknesses of the package

These are among the most important sections of the form because they require you to think critically about the package as a whole and to summarize your feelings about it. Your ratings in previous sections along with salient comments should serve as the basis for describing the package's strengths and weaknesses. Include in your considerations:

- usefulness
- unique features
- limitations
- potential obstructions to implementation and acceptance

Take this opportunity to qualify any extreme judgements made in previous sections.

Draft Annotation

The front and back pages of the in-depth form become the annotation for highly-rated resources. Prior to drafting, review sample annotations to get a sense of appropriate style and tone. If your comments point out major weaknesses or social considerations problems, you should reconsider your overall rating of the material.

Annotations are drafted in a standard format and must include all necessary user information as per your training instructions for the general description and comments.

General Description

This section should be completed only if an annotation will be written. Include a succinct description of what the product is and what it does. Describe unique or important characteristics. Where appropriate, briefly summarize the content, including major topic areas and/or objectives. Teachers should be able to make purchasing decisions with the help of this description.

General Comments

Please summarize the strengths and weaknesses and write them in this section. Include specific suggestions for integrating this package into the B.C. curriculum

Also consider including in this last section:

- special cautions or recommendations and observations not included elsewhere in the form
- a description of potential uses you envision for the package in specific classroom settings, making reference to the curriculum where appropriate
- references to potential integration with other courses/strands; reference to a specific topic or theme if possible
- references to other titles in the series, companion books etc. that have also been recommended
- if the same title has been recommended in a different format
- if the resource has won any notable awards

APPENDIX A

EVALUATION CRITERIA: LEARNING RESOURCES

The following information includes a compilation of generic criteria for resource evaluation as well as the specific criteria identified for special content areas and audiences.

These criteria are intended to support the information in the Evaluation Guide.

I. INTENTS

Materials should:

- be consistent with program philosophy, goals, and learning dimensions as outlined in the various Program documents.
- be supportive of the Ministry's commitments to gender equity, First Nations learners, Canadian and multicultural content as outlined in Ministry position statements and in the Year 2000 document.
- offer choice and flexibility as appropriate to meet learner needs relating to individual aptitudes, abilities and learning styles.

II. CONTENT/FORMAT

Materials should:

- have curricular relevance in supporting the goals and objectives of the curricula; the total resource package should include the minimum materials needed for teaching/learning the content specified in a curricular area.
- utilize a variety of media as presentation modes (print, video and software will be evaluated and these should be viewed as a package which collectively supports the learner).
- be current as appropriate (e.g., some classic novels are not "current" but are still desirable) and meaningful, introducing "real world" contexts as appropriate.
- be accurate (datedness is of more concern in some content areas than others in affecting accuracy).
- recognize the personal, familial and cultural contexts of a multicultural society.
- be suitable for classroom use in terms of ease of use, durability, and packaging.

III. METHODOLOGY

Materials should:

- be activity rather than lecture-based.
- draw students into group and co-operative learning as well as provide for individual growth.
- ask students to question, think, react, reflect, decide in ways that develop critical thinking and decision-making skills.
- provide for individual abilities, aptitudes and interests; pre-set/pre-determined sets of activities and/or skill sets should be scrutinized carefully.
- provide adequate teacher direction and support (consider the needs of a variety of teachers; consider also for multi-component programs if all components are desirable).
- address a range of abilities as appropriate (i.e., a major program is used with many students).
- be reasonable in terms of cost/usage expectations in a classroom setting (e.g., if a resource package would take more classroom teaching time than is reasonable, if used as intended, this factor should be considered).
- be of good quality in format as well as content.

IV. EVALUATION

Materials should support the Assessment Framework outlined in the Year 2000 document and:

- be supportive of continuous learning by the individual.
- provide for both formative and summation evaluation as appropriate.
- be relevant to the goals/objectives identified for the material.
- be relevant to the needs of the learner.

V. SOCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Materials should:

- reflect gender equity, First Nations learners, multicultural contexts (see below) and give priority to Canadian materials where these are of equal quality to other materials available.
- support/promote the student's own self-esteem and that of others.
- recognize the integration of handicapped students and those with special needs as part of the population in our classrooms.
- reflect sensitivity to a diversity of family backgrounds/configurations/values.

- reflect good safety practices in text and visuals (e.g., use of helmets, seatbelts, etc.)

Multicultural content considerations are addressed in other areas of this document. Your attention is specifically drawn to the following considerations.

The writer's use of language should not reinforce inaccurate images of minority groups and the global community. Examples of undesirable language use include:

- overused descriptive phrases such as "poor" and "overpopulated"
- words that connote negative values (e.g., "primitive and "hostile")
- derogatory adjectives (e.g., "lazy", "uncivilized" and "hostile")

The perspective from which information is presented is important (e.g., Is the information presented from a monocultural perspective of the dominant cultural group? Is an ethnocentric point of view evident which suggests a "we" - "they" perspective?).

Evidence of stereotyping (e.g., socio-economic class, personality, language use) in visuals and text should be noted. Consider the tone as well as the extent and context of the reference/visual.

VI. READABILITY

These criteria have relevance for general audiences as well as special needs audiences and other contexts such as ESL.

Vocabulary

- Consider the amount of technical vocabulary used and the devices used to interpret/explain/define technical terms.
- Consider the general level of difficulty of non-technical words used in terms of familiarity, abstractness.
- Realize that idiom and dialect increase reading difficulty.

Sentence Structure

- Consider the complexity of sentence patterns typically used (simple, compound, complex), but be alert to attempts to simplify by omitting needed connections between ideas.
- Note that unusual or unpredictable sentence patterns and use of long, involved sentences will increase the reading difficulty. Signal words which are associated with contrast, negation, and time are not well understood by many students in these audiences.(e.g., but, although, since, except, nevertheless, etc.). Avoid too frequent use of pronouns, especially where referents are ambiguous.

Paragraph Structure

- Note effective use and placement of topic sentences in paragraphs (usually easier if at beginning or end).
- Note whether paragraphs are cohesive and do have a main point; some writers tend to be less cohesive than others.

- Look for logical development or expansion of the idea(s) presented. Be aware of the need for connections which link paragraphs together in a logical sequence for the learner.

Text Structure

- Look for devices such as chapter and unit overviews, advance organizers and summaries; these are even more effective if supported graphically by diagrams and charts.
- Some materials assist the user to understand the package organization with "how to use", "how to read", "how to approach/study" information.
- Check that the hierarchy of information and the relationship among ideas are clearly communicated through effective and efficient use of contrasting print size and style. Look for a clean, clear structure without distraction provided by too frequent shifting of type size/style/colour.
- Check that questions provide for understanding prior to interpretation; questions and activities should be adequate and appropriate. It is helpful if categories of questions/activities indicate when the student should find the answer in the text and when other resources are needed to answer or perform expected tasks/activities.
- Features such as a table of contents, index, glossary, chapter and topic titles, which reflect content are all important reading aids for learners.

Visuals - (in textual materials)

- Look for clarity in visuals. Visuals should not be too dark or too cluttered or have too many competing elements.
- Look for effective placement to support textual content.
- Check to see if the visuals assist with comprehension. Visuals should be relevant and useful.
- Check to see if visuals will be clear if enlarged for student use. Verify that the current size is appropriate.
- Check to see if key content is covered in small print captions. Questions which are asked in captions should be able to be answered by students.
- Check to see if there is a variety of visuals. Some visually impaired/learning disabled students are more successful with colour and line while others are more successful with black and white and shapes.

VII. SPECIFIC CONCERNS/CRITERIA FOR SPECIAL AUDIENCES/CONTEXTS

SPECIAL NEEDS AUDIENCES

The multiplicity of learners integrated into the regular classroom ranges from slow learners to gifted. Included within this range are children with learning disabilities, mild mental handicaps, physical handicaps, hearing impairments, visual impairments and chronic health impairments.

Selected material needs to serve a broad student population and should include resources suitable for students with special needs.

The following charts identify some general learning characteristics and strategies for three special needs populations:

- students with mental handicaps
- students with learning disabilities
- students with gifted abilities

1. Students with Mild Mental Handicaps

GENERAL LEARNING CHARACTERISTICS	STRATEGIES
1. Experience difficulty in isolating and focusing on relevant dimensions of auditory and visual information.	• Point out relevant cues throughout instructional process.
2. Learn in concrete ways, and have difficulty with abstract concepts.	• Plan instruction using concrete materials and hands-on experiences.
3. Generally fail to develop strategies for attacking new problems.	• Present learning needs systematically. • Narrow response choices. • Organize materials and use methods leading to the right answer. • Provide cues.
4. Tend not to learn incidentally. Students with mental handicaps must be specifically taught skills that other students learn through observation.	• Break down a task into sequential steps. • Structure school experiences. • Use simple, precise instructions. • Model using concrete materials. • Proceed systematically so that basic concepts precede more difficult ones. • Follow Bloom's Taxonomy Level One. • Present a small number of concepts per lesson. • Teach routines (e.g., how to line up for recess).
5. Tend not to generalize easily.	• Same concept must be taught in a variety of ways and situations to ensure understanding.

6. Require overlearning in order to develop long-term memory.	• Provide for a positive transfer of knowledge from one situation to another by stating the relationship. • Material learned only to criterion is generally not retained. • Instructional program must be planned to teach to over-learning. • Space repetition of material over time. • Organize instruction to develop emotional security and independence and to assure success and a positive self-concept.
7. Often establish a failure set very early in life. Because of the high failure rate in the early learning process, these students do not attempt new types of learning. The teacher must present tasks in small steps for higher than average probabilities of success.	• Teach social skills directly. • Expect and insist on good behaviour. • Be consistent and follow routines that the student can master. • Teach social competency: the ability to get along with the student's peers.
8. Tend toward inappropriate social skills. Rejection by other students is more likely to come from this than from failure to learn intellectually.	• External evaluation and feedback are essential to the learning process, and must be coupled with high success rates.
9. Unable to evaluate their own performance.	

2. Students with Severe Learning Disabilities

GENERAL LEARNING CHARACTERISTICS	STRATEGIES
1. Experience major difficulties in focusing attention and receiving information. They are not incidental learners.	• Provide explicit, multisensory in instruction. • provide advanced organizers, including lesson outlines, vocabulary, key concepts. • Adjust the conceptual level of language. • Provide alternative means for receiving information, including tape recorded text books, or peer readers. • Adjust the learning environment to minimize distractions.
2. Difficulty process and generalizing written and spoken information.	• Structure the learning environment and the presentation of content materials. • Teach students how to organize tasks. • Adapt the teaching mode, to complement the students learning style. • Present material in a sequence which allows for the student's learning characteristics. • Allow for processing time. • Repeated practice should only be provided when it is needed to master a skill or a sub-skill.
3. Difficulty producing written information even though they may understand the content.	• Provide alternate ways to show understanding of content (e.g., allow the student to tape rather than write stories).

3. Gifted Students

GENERAL LEARNING CHARACTERISTICS	STRATEGIES
1. Have diverse interest and like to know what makes things and people "tick".	• Incorporate study of people and methods. Increase abstractness and decrease concreteness.
2. Enjoy abstract and complex concepts.	• Increase abstractness and complexity.
3. Enjoy variety.	• Increase variety.
4. Like to be "efficient" learner in terms of time.	• Increase economy or efficiency of learning time, increase pace.
5. Enjoy analysis, synthesis and evaluation.	• Increase higher levels of thinking, (e.g, Bloom's Taxonomy: (e.g., analysis, synthesis and evaluation).
6. Enjoy free-wheeling discussion, role-playing and the opportunity to display evidence of reasoning.	• Provide opportunities for open-ended and divergent thinking to develop critical thinking. • Provide opportunities to display evidence of reasoning. • Provide avenues for group interaction and role playing.
7. Display ability and enjoyment of self-directed learning.	• Provide opportunities for discovery, learning and freedom to select topics of study. • Study real problems. • Present to and be evaluated by real audiences. • Transform existing information.
8. Learn best in a student-centered, complex and accepting learning environment that provides for a high degree of mobility.	• Be student-centered not teacher-centered. • Encourage independence. • Provide complex, accepting learning environment. • Provide high mobility in learning environment.

The following criteria should be considered when selecting materials for other special needs audiences.

4. Students With Visual Impairments

Print

(a) Visibility and Placement of Print

Print which is separate from visuals rather than overlaid is easier to read. Strong contrast between print and background is preferable. White or pastel backgrounds are generally best. Colour used to differentiate between letters, numbers, or objects may not be perceived by some of this audience and image perception may be affected by colour variation. Predictable, consistent placement of print on the page reduces the burden on the reader.

(b) Size of Type

The larger the better is the general rule for this audience. Simpler fonts with no overlap or running together of letters are also of assistance in decoding. Random shifting of print sizes increases reading difficulty.

(c) Spacing

Words should be well-spaced with consistent distances between words and lines of type. Text, where many words have end of line breaks, is more difficult to read, particularly when words are broken arbitrarily rather than by syllables.

(d) Page Layout

Wider margins are preferable, as is generous use of white space to achieve a clean, uncluttered look to the page. Columnar presentation is more difficult for this audience.

(e) Illustrations

Clarity of shape is desirable (i.e., easily recognizable and realistic rendering of body parts, facial features etc.) Within multi-image visuals, clarity of colour and colour contrasts such that individual objects/shapes are easily distinguished are desirable. Shadows are difficult for this audience to discern. Less, rather than more, image detail is preferable. In general, photographs are less usable due to the need for photographic enlargement which renders them unreadable or unrecognizable. They are best used to show single focus events. Black and white provide fewer clues for some children than colour photographs, since many visually impaired children are colour dependent.

(f) General Concerns

Glare from shiny paper creates reading difficulties; clutter is undesirable in text and/or visuals. Reproducibility should be considered since many materials will require enlargement by a factor of up to 6. Illustrations which are relevant to print rather than peripheral are of assistance in understanding content. Accuracy of representation of situations and conditions is desirable.

Video

(a) Visual Presentation (action/motion)

Action should be center/front with characters in foreground. Viewer should be able to see what is happening by focusing on one part of the screen at a time. One or two deliberate actions rather than a number of simultaneous occurrences are preferred. Consider also clarity of form and colour contrast. Glare is a significant factor.

(b) Sound Presentation

Dialogue/narration should explain the action and accompany the action. Pronoun referents should be clear. Distinctly different and contrasting voices allow distinction of characters. Sound quality is important. There should be no background sound masking or competing with significant aspects. Avoid distortion of sound , especially speech.

5. Students With Hearing Impairments And Other Students Who May Experience Language Difficulties

Print

(a) Sentence Length

- Long, complex sentences provide more opportunity for misuse and misinterpretation of the wording and difficulty in internalizing the total meaning.
- Could long sentences be rewritten as two or more shorter ones?
- Does the material use a simple conjunction in a compound sentence?

(b) Difficult Vocabulary Load

- Does the material contain only essential technical vocabulary?

(c) Concept Density

- Are there too many unfamiliar concepts in a single sentence?
- Does the material contain more than one concept in each sentence?
- Does the material use illustrative material (pictures, graphs, etc.), to support the print?

(d) Pronoun Referents

- When the material uses a pronoun which refers to a noun previously used, is the referent or antecedent very clear?
- Is the referent repeated often?
- Does the material contain too many synonyms for the same word?
- Does a pronoun such as "this" refer to a number of things, a complex preceding situation, or to a series of events?

(e) Transitional Words

- Are words such as "that" omitted where they might have clarified a sentence connection?
- Are thoughts connected using simple coordinating conjunctions (and, so, but), rather than less common connectors (nevertheless, as a consequence, etc.)?

(f) General Considerations Which Increase Understanding

- Cause and effect expressions are in simple form.
- Careful, limited use of conditional expressions (such as, assuming that, etc.), is made.
- Footnotes or explanatory notations are used for difficult words or complex concepts.
- Context increases rather than decreases clarity.
- Questions avoid long, involved grammatical structure.
- Illustrations are as close as possible to relevant text.
- The following are either avoided or used minimally: passive voice verbs; expressions of negation; too many modifying phrases in one sentence; colloquial or ideomatic expression, etc.

6. ESL Students

(Source: Languages and Multicultural Programs Branch)

The following factors help to clarify meaning for ESL students.

(a) Text Organization
- table of contents
- index
- glossary
- chapter title matches main idea
- subtopics identified
- overview or advance organizer
- summaries

(b) Language
- vocabulary density
- clear sentence structure
- clear main ideas
- development of ideas with relevant details
- paragraph development
- use of signal words (ordinals) , for sequence, emphasis, comparison, etc.
- contextual clues

(c) Visual support for concepts
- useful graphics (not just pictures)
- support, enhance, re-explain main ideas
- graphics close to relevant text
- variety of type which illustrate concepts and thought processes

7. Correspondence Students

(Source: Distance Learning and Continuing Education Branch)

Audio cassettes and filmstrips are particularly effective non-print media for distance learners since almost everyone has an audio recorder and hand-held viewers can be supplied at a reasonable cost.

Materials that reflect the rural environment and values of rural life are of particular interest (perhaps especially to First Nations Learners).

SPECIFIC CONTEXTS

In addition to special needs audiences, learning resources need to be considered for a variety of contexts. Please consider the following statements when evaluating materials.

Gender Equity

1. Students have a right to a learning environment that is gender equitable.

2. Attitudes and behaviours which contribute to gender equity are learned and therefore, can be taught to both students and teachers.

3. Female and male students have had different experiences in school and in society and thus, may have different ways of learning. In a gender equitable educational system, all ways of learning are respected equally.

4. Language influences the way in which people understand and interpret the world around them; therefore, language which includes both genders and gives them equal status is important to achieving gender equity.

5. Since students learn not only factual information but also attitudes and values about the roles that women and men are expected to play in society from the materials they use, it is important that recommended learning resources reflect gender equity.

6. Some materials contain an inherent gender bias because of historical or cultural context. Reference should be made to this in the evaluation form.

Native Education

1. All children come to school with values, beliefs and knowledge that reflect their personal and social backgrounds.

2. First Nations students have an important contribution to make to the education of all by bringing their rich cultural and language traditions to the school and classroom environment.

3. First Nations students should be provided with a broad range of approaches to curriculum and assessment to provide for appropriate and relevant means of achieving their intellectual, human, social and career goals.

4. First Nations students should be assisted in retaining and strengthening their linguistic and cultural heritage by promoting the infusion of language and culture into regular curricula and providing for active involvement of First Nations peoples in the curriculum development process.

To these ends, recommended resources should include materials which:

- recognize the contribution First Nations people have made to our society
- recognize the diversity of First Nations societies and avoid traditional stereotypes
- provide accurate information on historical and contemporary First Nations culture
- present positive First Nations role models
- recognize the aspirations of First Nations peoples
- present opportunities for learning activities which reflect First Nations values and beliefs, including co-operative learning, experiential learning, the role of family and elders and the relationship that people have with the natural environment.

These criteria should be in the context of British Columbia and the Northwest region of North America.

Multiculturalism

1. The economic, cultural and social richness evident today in our society results from the contribution of all cultural groups residing in Canada.

2. Learners from diverse cultural backgrounds need to be respected and acknowledged with respect to their cultural heritages, languages, traditions, values, and lifestyles.

3. The development of positive racial attitudes with pride in one's heritage increases self-esteem.

4. Prejudice can be reduced by introducing learning activities that raise levels of awareness concerning ethnocentrism, bias, stereotypes, discrimination and racism.

To these ends, recommended resources should include materials which:

- maintain and extend ethnic and cultural diversity
- create sensitivity to and acceptance of differences within and among groups
- affirm and enhance self-esteem through pride in heritage
- promote cross-cultural understanding, citizenship and racial harmony
- validate students' cultural experiences.